

FINAL
SUMMARY REPORT
SNAPPER GROUPEr COMMITTEE
SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
Charleston, SC
September 25-29, 2017

The Committee approved minutes from the June 2017 meeting and the agenda.

Status of Commercial Catches versus Quotas for Species under ACLs

NMFS Southeast Regional Office (SERO) staff delivered briefings to the Committee on the status of commercial relative to the respective ACLs.

Status of Amendments under Formal Review

SERO staff updated the Committee on the status amendments currently under review:

- Amendment 37: the review process was completed and the final rule published on July 25, 2017 and regulations were effective on August 24, 2017.
- Amendment 41: the Notice of Availability (NOA) published on September 26, 2017. The comment period closes on November 27, 2017.
- Golden tilefish interim rule: at the Council's request, SERO prepared an Environmental Assessment to implement reduced fishing levels for golden tilefish. It is expected that new levels would be effective by the start of the 2018 fishing year or soon thereafter.

Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendment 26 (Recreational)

Council staff delivered a presentation to orient the Committee on guidance provided during the June 2017 meeting, review timing, and objectives for this meeting. Included in the presentation was an alternative approach to develop the amendment that staff proposed for the Committee's consideration. The Committee approved re-structuring the amendment with some modifications. The Committee provided guidance as follows:

**MOTION #1: ADOPT ALTERNATIVE APPROACH AS MODIFIED BY THE COMMITTEE IN SEPTEMBER 2017 AND DIRECT STAFF TO PROCEED WITH DEVELOPMENT OF THE AMENDMENT ACCORDINGLY
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL**

MOTION #2: APPROVE TIMING BELOW FOR VISION BLUEPRINT REGULATORY AMENDMENT 26:

- DECEMBER 2017 – REVIEW/FINALIZE ACTIONS/ALTERNATIVES AND PURPOSE AND NEED
- MARCH 2018 – REVIEW ANALYSES, SELECT PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES, AND APPROVE FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS
- JUNE 2018 – REVIEW PUBLIC COMMENT, MODIFY DOCUMENT AS APPROPRIATE, AND APPROVE ALL ACTIONS
- SEPTEMBER 2018 – REVIEW AND APPROVE FOR FORMAL REVIEW

**APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL**

MOTION #3: APPROVE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS TO INCLUDE IN PURPOSE AND NEED STATEMENT:

- STABILIZE RECREATIONAL ACCESS
- STABILITY IN THE FISHERY
- ENSURE THAT “ACCESS” IS PROPERLY CHARACTERIZED (I.E. “INCREASE” VS. “FACILITATE”, “MAINTAIN”, “IMPROVE”?)
- REGULATORY DISCARDS
- INCLUDE PHRASE THAT INDICATES PURPOSE IS TO RESPOND TO STAKEHOLDER CONCERNS
- SIMPLIFICATION OF REGULATIONS
- PREDICTABILITY
- LOOK AT DRAFT P&N FROM DECEMBER 2016
- CLARIFY/REWORD “COMPATIBLE REGULATIONS” IN NEED STATEMENT (PROMOTE ANGLER UNDERSTANDING AND ADHERENCE TO THE REGULATIONS)

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #4: MODIFY ALTERNATIVES AS PRESENTED UNDER ACTION 1 (ALTERNATIVE 3 AND ITS SUB-ALTERNATIVES) IN DECISION DOCUMENT TO INCLUDE WRECKFISH IN THE DEEP-WATER SPECIES AGGREGATE AND MODIFY THE COMPOSITION OF THE DEEPWATER COMPLEX TO EXCLUDE SAND TILEFISH AND PLACE IT IN AN APPROPRIATE SHALLOW-WATER COMPLEX

Action 1. Modify the species composition of the recreational aggregates

Alternative 3. Modify existing aggregates to establish a deep-water species aggregate including:

Sub-alternative 3a. Snappers only: queen snapper, blackfin snapper, and silk snapper

Sub-alternative 3b. Groupers and tilefishes only: snowy grouper, misty grouper, yellowedge grouper, blueline tilefish, and golden tilefish.

Sub-alternative 3c. Snappers, groupers, and tilefishes, combined: queen snapper, blackfin snapper, silk snapper, snowy grouper, misty grouper, yellowedge grouper, blueline tilefish, and golden tilefish.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

NOTE: The Committee acknowledged that changes to the composition of a species complex cannot be accomplished through a regulatory amendment. Hence, a plan amendment would be prepared. Council clarified intent to only modify composition of aggregates for bag limit specifications at this time. Modification of complexes for tracking ACLs would also affect commercial ACLs (and consideration should be given to species that are under rebuilding plans).

MOTION # 5: INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING IN ALTERNATIVES FOR A DEEP-WATER SPECIES SEASON:

- MAY 1 TO AUGUST 31 (CURRENT SEASON FOR SNOWY AND BLUELINE)
- MAY 1 TO JUNE 30
- JULY 1 TO AUGUST 31
- JULY 1 TO OCTOBER 31

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION # 6: INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING IN ALTERNATIVES FOR A DEEP-WATER SPECIES AGGREGATE BAG LIMIT (INCLUDING SUB-ALTERNATIVES FOR EACH TO MAINTAIN EXISTING RESTRICTIONS FOR GOLDEN TILEFISH, SNOWY GROUPER, AND WRECKFISH)

- ONE FISH PER PERSON PER DAY
- TWO FISH PER PERSON PER DAY
- THREE PER PERSON PER DAY

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

The Committee provided guidance to retain alternatives in the Decision Document to consider changes to minimum size limits and gear requirements for deep-water species:

Remove recreational minimum size limits for deep-water species

Alternative 1 (No Action). The recreational minimum size limit for queen snapper, silk snapper, and blackfin snapper in the South Atlantic Exclusive Economic Zone is 12 inches total length.

Alternative 2. Remove the 12-inch total length recreational minimum size limit for queen snapper, silk snapper, and blackfin snapper in the South Atlantic Exclusive Economic Zone.

Specify gear requirements for deep-water species

Alternative 1 (No Action). There are no gear requirements to target deep-water species (golden tilefish, queen snapper, silk snapper, blackfin snapper, misty grouper, and yellowedge grouper).

Alternative 2. Require single-hook rigs when targeting deep-water species (golden tilefish, queen snapper, silk snapper, blackfin snapper, misty grouper, and yellowedge grouper)

Note: Based on Committee guidance above (motion #4), appropriate modifications would be made to the alternatives above to include wreckfish and snowy grouper.

The Committee provided guidance to allow the IPT to suggest an appropriate range of alternatives to establish a Shallow-Water Grouper Aggregate.

MOTION #7: INCLUDE ALTERNATIVES TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING SEASONS FOR THE SHALLOW-WATER GROUPER AGGREGATE AND INCLUDE ALTERNATIVES 2, 3 AND 4 FROM THE DECISION DOCUMENT:

- MAY 1 TO DECEMBER 31 (CURRENT SEASON)
- **Alternative 2.** Maintain seasonal prohibition on recreational harvest of shallow-water groupers annually from January 1 to April 30 north of 28 degrees North latitude. Prohibit recreational harvest and possession of shallow-water grouper species (gag, scamp, red grouper, yellowfin grouper, yellowmouth grouper, red hind, rock hind, graysby, and coney) (excluding black grouper) south of 28° North latitude (approximately off Palm Bay, Florida):

Sub-alternative 2a. January – March (three months)

Sub-alternative 2b. February – March (two months)

Sub-alternative 2c. February – April (three months)

Sub-alternative 2d. February – May (four months)

- **Alternative 3.** Maintain seasonal prohibition on recreational harvest of shallow-water groupers annually from January 1 to April 30 north of 28 degrees North latitude. Prohibit recreational harvest and possession of black grouper in the federal waters Exclusive Economic Zone south of 28 degrees north latitude
 - Sub-alternative 3a. January – March (three months)
 - Sub-alternative 3b. January
 - Sub-alternative 3c. February
 - Sub-alternative 3d. March
- **Alternative 4.** Maintain seasonal prohibition on recreational harvest of shallow-water groupers annually from January 1 to April 30 in the Exclusive Economic Zone off Georgia and east Florida. Prohibit recreational harvest and possession of red grouper in federal waters the Exclusive Economic Zone off North Carolina and South Carolina
 - Sub-alternative 4a.** January – May (five months)
 - Sub-alternative 4b.** February – May (four months)
 - Sub-alternative 4c.** March – June (four months)

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #8: INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING ALTERNATIVES FOR AGGREGATE BAG LIMITS FOR THE SHALLOW-WATER GROUPER AGGREGATE:

Two per person per day.

Two per person per day with existing restrictions on gag and black grouper.

Three per person per day.

Three per person per day with existing restrictions on gag and black grouper.

Four per person per day.

Four per person per day with existing restrictions on gag and black grouper.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

The Committee provided guidance to remove consideration of minimum size limit modifications for the Shallow-Water Grouper Aggregate and discuss consideration of gear restrictions once Amendment 46 actions and alternatives have been further developed.

MOTION #9: DIRECT STAFF TO ADD AN ACTION TO ESTABLISH A 20-FISH MAXIMUM DAILY RECREATIONAL BAG LIMIT THAT WOULD MAINTAIN ALL EXISTING INDIVIDUAL AND AGGREGATE BAG LIMITS WITH SUB-ALTERNATIVES TO 1) INCLUDE DEEP-WATER SPECIES AND 2) EXCLUDE DEEP-WATER SPECIES

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #10: DEVELOP ALTERNATIVES TO ESTABLISH AN “OTHER SHALLOW-WATER SPECIES” AGGREGATE THAT:

1. INCLUDES SPECIES OUTSIDE THE EXISTING AGGREGATES (I.E., BLACK SEA BASS, VERMILION, ETC.) AND INCLUDE ALTERNATIVES TO RETAIN EXISTING BAG LIMITS FOR THOSE SPECIES WITHIN THE AGGREGATE AND

INCLUDE SUB-ALTERNATIVES FROM ACTION 2/ALTERNATIVE 5 IN DECISION DOCUMENT

2. EXCLUDES SPECIES OUTSIDE EXISTING AGGREGATES (I.E., BSB, VS, RP, AJ, ETC) AND INCLUDE SUB-ALTERNATIVES FROM ACTION 2/ALTERNATIVE 5 IN DECISION DOCUMENT

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

The Committee provided guidance to exclude consideration of a recreational season for the Other Shallow-Water Species Aggregate and wait until the December meeting to consider any gear restriction alternatives.

MOTION #11: MOVE ACTION TO REDUCE THE BLACK SEA BASS MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE (1 OPPOSED)

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #12: REMOVE ACTION ON POWERHEADS FROM VISION BLUEPRINT REGULATORY AMENDMENT 26 AND MOVE TO AMENDMENT 46.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE (3 OPPOSED)

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Council provided guidance to approve editorial changes to actions and alternatives as presented in the Decision Document.

Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendment 27 (Commercial)

Council staff delivered a presentation to orient the Committee on guidance provided during the June 2017 meeting, review timing, and objectives for this meeting. The Committee provided the following guidance:

MOTION #13: ACCEPT IPT'S SUGGESTED EDITS TO THE PURPOSE AND NEED AND APPROVE

Purpose: The purpose of this amendment is to increase commercial access to the snapper grouper fishery, minimize discards, and simplify regulations.

Need: The need for this amendment is to achieve optimum yield from the commercial component of the snapper grouper fishery and improve regulatory compliance and consistency to aid enforcement.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #14: CHANGE ACTION 1, ALTERNATIVE 2 ACL PERCENTAGES TO 40%/60% AND REMOVE SUB-ALTERNATIVE 2B.

Action 1. Establish a commercial split season and modify the commercial trip limit for blueline tilefish

Alternative 2. Specify two commercial fishing seasons for blueline tilefish. Allocate the blueline tilefish commercial ACL into two quotas: 60% to the period January 1 through June 30 and 40% to the period July 1 through December 31. Any remaining quota from Season One

would transfer to Season Two. Any remaining quota from Season Two would not be carried forward.

Sub-alternative 2a. Season 1 trip limit = 100 lbs gw, Season 2 trip limit = 300 lbs gw.

Sub-alternative 2b. Season 1 trip limit = 300 lbs gw, Season 2 trip limit = 100 lbs gw

MODIFY SUB-ALTERNATIVE 2C AS FOLLOWS:

Sub-alternative 2c. Season 1 trip limit = 150 lbs gw, Season 2 trip limit = 300 lbs gw

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #15: MOVE ACTION 1, ALTERNATIVE 3 TO CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX

Action 1. Establish a commercial split season and modify the commercial trip limit for blueline tilefish

Alternative 3. Specify two commercial fishing seasons for blueline tilefish. Allocate the blueline tilefish commercial ACL into two quotas: XX% to the period January 1 through _____ and YY% to the period ____ through December 31. Any remaining quota from Season One would transfer to Season Two. Any remaining quota from Season Two would not be carried forward.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #16: ADD SUB-ALTERNATIVE TO ACTION 1, ALTERNATIVE 4 TO CONSIDER 100 POUNDS JANUARY-JUNE AND 300 POUNDS JULY-DECEMBER

Action 1. Establish a commercial split season and modify the commercial trip limit for blueline tilefish

Alternative 4. Modify the commercial trip for blueline tilefish:

Sub-alternative 4a. 100 lbs gw from January 1 through April 30 and 300 lbs gw from May 1 through December 31

Sub-alternative 4b. 150 lbs gw from January 1 through April 30 and 300 lbs gw from May 1 through December 31

Sub-alternative 4c. 100 lbs gw from January 1 through April 30 and 400 lbs gw from May 1 through December 31

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #17: MODIFY ACTION 2, ALTERNATIVE 3 AS FOLLOWS:

Action 2. Establish a commercial split season for snowy grouper

Alternative 3. Specify two commercial fishing seasons for snowy grouper. Allocate the snowy grouper commercial ACL into two quotas: 70% to the period January 1 through June 30 and 30% to the period July 1 through December 31. Any remaining quota from Season 1 would transfer to Season 2. Any remaining quota from Season 2 would not be carried forward.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #18: MODIFY ACTION 3, SUB-ALTERNATIVE 2C TO INCLUDE A 1,000 TRIP LIMIT IN BOTH SEASONS WITH A STEP-DOWN TO 500 POUNDS WHEN 75% OF THE COMMERCIAL ACL HAS BEEN MET IN EACH SEASON

Action 3. Establish a commercial split season and modify commercial trip limit for greater amberjack

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

The Committee provided guidance to include language in the appropriate sub-alternatives that would specify that a step-down would not occur if 75% of the ACL was harvested close to the end of the fishing season.

MOTION #19: ALLOCATE THE COMMERCIAL ACL 50/50 TO EACH SEASON UNDER ACTION 3, ALTERNATIVE 2.

Action 3. Establish a commercial split season and modify commercial trip limit for greater amberjack

Alternative 2. Specify two commercial fishing seasons for greater amberjack. Allocate the commercial ACL for greater amberjack into two quotas: XX% to the period March 1 through August 31 and XX% to the period September 1 through the end of February.

Any remaining quota from Season One would transfer to Season Two. Any remaining quota from Season Two would not be carried forward.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #20: ADD ALTERNATIVE 3 TO ACTION 3 TO CONSIDER A 60/40 SPLIT OF THE COMMERCIAL ACL BETWEEN SEASONS WITH THE SAME SUB-ALTERNATIVES AS UNDER ALTERNATIVE 2

Action 3. Establish a commercial split season and modify commercial trip limit for greater amberjack

Sub-alternative 3a. Season 1 trip limit = 1,200 lbs ww, Season 2 trip limit = 1,000 lbs ww. Season 2 would include a trip limit step-down to 750 lbs ww when 75% of the ACL is met or projected to be met.

Sub-alternative 3b. Season 1 trip limit = 1,200 lbs ww, Season 2 trip limit = 1,000 lbs ww. Season 2 would include a trip limit step-down to 500 lbs ww when 75% of the ACL is met or projected to be met.

Sub-alternative 3c. Season 1 trip limit = 1,000 lbs ww, Season 2 trip limit = 1,000 lbs ww. Both seasons would include a trip limit step-down to 500 lbs ww when 75% of the ACL is met or projected to be met.

(Note: this sub-alternative included per guidance under motion #18)

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #21: MOVE ALTERNATIVE 2 UNDER ACTION 4 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX

Action 4. Establish a commercial split season and modify commercial trip limit for red porgy

Alternative 2. Maintain the annual January 1 to April 30 seasonal harvest limit for red porgy.

Sub-Alternative 2a. Allocate the directed commercial red porgy ACL into two quotas: 50% to the period January 1 through June 30 and 50% to the period July 1 through

December 31. Any remaining quota from Season One would transfer to Season Two.

Any remaining quota from Season Two would not be carried forward.

Sub-alternative 2b. Allocate the directed commercial red porgy ACL into two quotas: XX% to the period January 1 through _____ and YY% to the period ____ through December 31. Any remaining quota from Season One would transfer to Season Two. Any remaining quota from Season Two would not be carried forward.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #22: MODIFY ALTERNATIVE 3 UNDER ACTION 4 AS FOLLOWS:

Alternative 3. Specify two commercial fishing seasons for red porgy. Allocate the commercial red porgy ACL into two quotas: 30% to the period January 1 through April 30 and 70% to the period May 1 through December 31. Any remaining quota from Season One would transfer to Season Two. Any remaining quota from Season Two would not be carried forward. Modify the annual January 1 to April 30 seasonal harvest limit for red porgy.

- Sub-alternative 3a.** 30 fish
- Sub-alternative 3b.** 45 fish
- Sub-alternative 3d.** 60 fish

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #23: ADD ALTERNATIVE ACTION 4 TO SPLIT COMMERCIAL ACL 50/50 JANUARY-APRIL AND MAY-DECEMBER AND ADD SUB-ALTERNATIVES OF 30, 60, AND 120 FISH FOR JAN-APRIL.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE (3 OPPOSED)
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #24: ACCEPT THE IPT'S SUGGESTED EDITS TO THE ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 5

Action 5. Modify the commercial trip limit for vermilion snapper in the second season

Alternative 1 (No Action). The commercial trip limit for vermilion snapper in the South Atlantic Exclusive Economic Zone is 1,000 pounds gutted weight (lbs gw) and the commercial annual catch limit is split equally between two 6-month seasons. For both seasons, when 75% of the vermilion snapper seasonal quota is met or is projected to be met, the trip limit is reduced to 500 lbs gw. Any remaining quota from Season One transfers to Season Two. Any remaining quota from Season Two is not carried forward.

Alternative 2. Retain the management measures in the first season (January 1 through June 30). For the second season (July 1 through December 31), change the commercial trip limit to 750 lbs gw and retain the trip limit step down to 500 lbs gw when 75% of the second season quota is met or projected to be met.

Alternative 3. the management measures in the first season (January 1 through June 30). For the second season (July 1 through December 31), change the commercial trip limit to 500 lbs gw and remove the trip limit step down to 500 lbs gw when 75% of the seasonal quota is met or projected to be met.

Alternative 4. Change the commercial trip limits for both seasons (January 1 through June 30; July 1 through December 31) to 750 lbs gw and remove the Season Two trip limit step-down when 75% of the seasonal quota is met or projected to be met.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #25: ACCEPT THE IPT'S SUGGESTED EDITS TO THE ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 6

Action 6. Implement a commercial trip limit for the Other Jacks Complex

Alternative 1 (No Action). There is no commercial trip limit for the Other Jacks Complex (lesser amberjack, almaco jack, and banded rudderfish).

Alternative 2. Establish a commercial trip limit for the Other Jacks Complex.

Sub-alternative 2a. 500 pounds gutted weight

Sub-alternative 2b. 400 pounds gutted weight

Sub-alternative 2c. 300 pounds gutted weight

Alternative 3. Establish a commercial trip limit for almaco jack only.

Sub-alternative 3a. 500 pounds gutted weight

Sub-alternative 3b. 400 pounds gutted weight

Sub-alternative 3c. 300 pounds gutted weight

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #26: UNDER EACH SUB-ALTERNATIVE OF ALTERNATIVE 2 (Action 6) INCLUDE A TRIP LIMIT STEP DOWN TO 50% OF THE TRIP LIMIT ONCE 75% OF THE ACL HAS BEEN MET

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #27: MOVE ALTERNATIVE 3 UNDER ACTION 6 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX

Action 6. Implement a commercial trip limit for the Other Jacks Complex

Alternative 3. Establish a commercial trip limit for almaco jack only.

Sub-alternative 3a. 500 pounds gutted weight

Sub-alternative 3b. 400 pounds gutted weight

Sub-alternative 3c. 300 pounds gutted weight

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #28: ADD AN ACTION TO IMPLEMENT A MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT FOR ALMACO JACK. INCLUDE RANGE OF 20-26 INCHES FORK LENGTH

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

GUIDANCE FOR IPT TO ASSIST WITH RANGE

MOTION #29: MODIFY ALTERNATIVE 3 UNDER ACTION 7 AS FOLLOWS:

Action 7. Modify the seasonal prohibition on commercial harvest and possession of shallow-water groupers

Alternative 3. Maintain seasonal prohibition on commercial harvest of shallow-water groupers (excluding gag) annually from January 1 through April 30. Commercial harvest of gag is prohibited from January 1 through March 31 each year. Specify a trip limit for gag during April in the South Atlantic Exclusive Economic Zone south of 28 degrees North Latitude:

Sub-alternative 3a. 100 pounds gutted weight

Sub-alternative 3b. 200 pounds gutted weight

Sub-alternative 3c. 300 pounds gutted weight

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

The Committee provided guidance to change the order of the alternatives (place alternative 4 following alternative 2) and include a map to show the 28-degree N Lat. boundary.

MOTION #30: ACCEPT THE IPT'S SUGGESTED EDITS TO THE ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 8

Action 8. Remove the commercial minimum size limits for certain deep-water species

Alternative 1 (No Action). The commercial minimum size limit for queen snapper, silk snapper, and blackfin snapper in the South Atlantic federal waters Exclusive Economic Zone is 12 inches (TL) total length.

Alternative 2. Remove the 12-inch (TL) total length commercial minimum size limit for queen snapper, silk snapper, and blackfin snapper in the South Atlantic federal waters Exclusive Economic Zone.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #31: ACCEPT THE IPT'S SUGGESTED EDITS TO ACTION 9 AND ITS ALTERNATIVES

Action 9. ~~Decrease~~ Reduce the commercial minimum size limit for gray triggerfish in federal waters the Exclusive Economic Zone off the east coast of Florida

Alternative 1 (No Action). The commercial minimum size limit for gray triggerfish in South Atlantic federal waters off the east coast of Florida is 14 inches fork length. The recreational minimum size limit for gray triggerfish in federal waters the Exclusive Economic Zone off Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina is 12 inches FL fork length.

Preferred Alternative 2. Reduce the COMMERCIAL minimum size limit for gray triggerfish in federal waters the Exclusive Economic Zone off the east coast of Florida to 12 inches FL fork length.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #32: REMOVE ACTION 10 FROM THE VISION BLUEPRINT REGULATORY AMENDMENT 27 AND MOVE TO AMENDMENT 46

Action 10. Remove the commercial prohibition on the use of powerheads in the Exclusive Economic Zone off South Carolina

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #33: APPROVE THE SAME TIMING FOR VISION BLUEPRINT REGULATORY AMENDMENT 27 AS THAT FOR VISION BLUEPRINT REGULATORY AMENDMENT 26 (FINAL APPROVAL IN SEPTEMBER 2018) (see motion #2)

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Socio-economic Characterization/Portfolio Analysis of the Commercial Snapper Grouper Fishery

Council staff updated the Committee on progress to date on this topic. The Committee was informed that Dr. Kari MacLauchlin has been contracted to continue work on the project and deliver it to the Committee/Council at the March 2018 meeting.

Red grouper

The Council received a notification from NMFS (dated September 27, 2017) advising that the South Atlantic red grouper stock is overfished and undergoing overfishing and measures will need to be implemented within two years to end overfishing and put a rebuilding plan in place. During the June 2017 meeting, the Council voted to request additional projections for red grouper with management starting in 2018, under both expected and low recruitment scenarios, for $75\%F_{MSY}$ and F_{MSY} . The SSC will review the projections during their October 24-26, 2017 meeting and provide an ABC recommendation for red grouper at that time. The Committee directed staff to use the expedited framework procedure to implement adjustments to the red grouper ABC and ACL, and expressed support for basing ACL on the “low recruitment scenario” projections. Staff would then develop an amendment to implement a new rebuilding plan based on the SSC’s input and stock productivity estimates from the base assessment run.

ABC Control Rule Modifications Amendment

Council staff briefly reviewed proposed modifications for the ABC control rule, including allowing the Council to set risk tolerance and incorporating added flexibility per recent revisions to national standard guidelines. The SSC will review and further discuss changes to the control rule at their October 2017 meeting. In addition, staff proposed including in the amendment possible revisions to accountability measures. The Committee/Council will continue discussion on this topic at the December meeting, and may consider holding a meeting via webinar between the October SSC meeting and December Council meeting to discuss the control rule in detail.

Wreckfish ITQ Review

SERO staff delivered a presentation on NOAA guidance regarding reviews of catch share programs and how that guidance would apply to the wreckfish ITQ program review. It was determined that an initial review of the program was in fact conducted in 2009. Council staff then recapped guidance from the June meeting on this item and summarized discussions that took place among wreckfish ITQ program shareholders during their August 2017 meeting in Daytona Beach. Input from shareholders included:

- Desire to do away with paper coupons in favor of electronic
- Until the ACL can be increased, there is no need to modify the program in terms of eligibility, new entrants, or distribution of shares
- Shareholders do not want changes to transferability or accumulation caps
- Shareholders were interested in updating the estimate of law enforcement cost associated with the program
- Shareholders would like modifications to the offloading requirements
- Shareholders requested that the SSC comment on the data deficiencies for the fishery and additional data needed to reconsider the ABC/ACL.

The Committee is scheduled to discuss this topic again in December 2017. They will review a rough draft of the review document and any input from the SSC and perhaps the SEP if a webinar meeting can be scheduled prior to the December Council meeting.

Atlantic Coast Wide Planning to Address Climate Change

The Committee Chair provided background on previous dialogue on this topic among Councils and NMFS in recent years and provided rationale for furthering those discussions at this time. Council staff briefly reviewed a document summarizing landings of unmanaged snapper grouper species in the Mid-Atlantic and New England regions. The Committee discussed some short- and long-term steps that state and federal management agencies could take to address shifting distributions of species in response to climate change to ensure adequate management in the future. The Mid-Atlantic Council representative on the Snapper Grouper Committee and SEFSC director both reiterated the importance of continuing dialogue and collaboration among Councils and NMFS on this issue.

Other Business

No items were brought up for discussion.

DRAFT Timing and Task:

MOTION# 34: Direct staff to conduct the following:

1. CONTINUE WORK ON VISIONING AMENDMENTS 26 & 27 AND PREPARE FOR THE DECEMBER MEETING
2. PREPARE EXPEDITED FRAMEWORK TO ADJUST RED GROUPE ABC & ACL USING “LOW RECRUITMENT” PROJECTIONS
3. OBTAIN SSC INPUT ON RED GROUPE ABC TO IMPLEMENT A REBUILDING PLAN
4. OBTAIN SSC INPUT ON ABC CONTROL RULE MODIFICATIONS
5. CONSIDER HOLDING A MEETING VIA WEBINAR BETWEEN THE OCTOBER SSC MEETING AND DECEMBER COUNCIL MEETING TO DISCUSS THE CONTROL RULE IN DETAIL.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL